

AIA in search of Malaysia's healthiest workplace

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BY ADAM AZIZ & BILLY TOH

KUALA LUMPUR: AIA Bhd is taking its AIA Vitality wellness programme a notch higher — from individual policyholders to corporate clients — with the launch of a survey that seeks to find Malaysia's healthiest workplace.

Last Friday, the insurer kicked off the first Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace survey by AIA Vitality. Targeting over 50 entries from organisations across both the public and private sectors of Malaysia, the survey will analyse workplace health trends and recognise efforts made by employers to promote workplace health.

Vitality Group senior vice-president and chief health officer Derek Yach said the survey's main objective is to create awareness among corporates in Malaysia of the benefits and importance of creating a healthy work environment for employees.

By being healthy, he said, employees' spark is kept alive and they will be able to engage in the often high-pressure workplace. As for the more tangible benefits, healthcare costs will also be reduced.

"Companies need to recognise that every dollar they put into prevention [of diseases] in the workplace is likely to save three dollars in healthcare costs," he added.

Yach cited a US- and South Africa-based study which demonstrated that best-in-class workplace health programmes are linked to improved stock performance by comparing long-term stock performances on the S&P 500 Index and the Johannesburg stock index via a portfolio of companies with the best health programmes in place.

"It will be interesting to see whether companies on Bursa Malaysia that offer the best health programmes become the best places to work and the best companies to invest in," he added.

AIA chief marketing officer Eric Chang said a Healthy Living Index survey conducted last year showed several new threats to healthy living, such as an alarming rise of non-communicable and chronic diseases.

According to Chang, as most adults

spend a significant portion of their time at the workplace, the survey provides an opportunity to help organisations improve their workplace environment, which will eventually help Malaysians live longer, healthier and better lives.

"This is a great opportunity for companies to participate in a survey that helps them to be aware of the health of their employees, and the programmes that they currently have and how they will impact the wellness of their employees.

"They will also learn that the improvement of their employees' health will have a real impact on productivity," Chang said, adding that the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace survey by AIA Vitality is free to enter and is open for registration until May 15.

The survey is part of the first science-backed workplace health survey series in Asia, which will identify the healthiest employees, healthiest employer and healthiest workplace across a range of organisation-size categories.

Concurrently, the survey is also conducted in Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore, and winners in the respective countries will be judged against their peers to find the overall winner.

With the objective to assess the associated impact on health and productivity, the survey will examine data on employees' lifestyles, clinical indicators, mental health, stress factors and other areas of concern.

Participating organisations will also receive a comprehensive report outlining the overall health of the organisations compared with their peers, while employees will receive individual health reports.

The survey will feature online questionnaires in the form of employer health survey to be filled by an authorised representative of the workplace, and employee surveys to be completed individually on a voluntary basis.

The Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace survey by AIA Vitality is built on the success of the Britain's Healthiest Workplace survey, which has involved over 100,00 employees and 400 employers since its launch in 2013.

